

*Banks and Federal Regulators Must Act in Better Interest of Communities*

February 3, 2010

Media Contact: Rebecca Dreilinger (202) 225-8203

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**(Chicago, IL)** Today, U.S. Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez, Chair of the Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit made the following statement:

"Barely two weeks ago, I chaired a hearing on the condition of financial institutions, focusing on community bank failures and using the recent seizure of FBOP and its sale to U.S. Bancorp as a case study for lessons learned. During the hearing, I asked Mr. Richard Hartnack, Vice Chairman of U.S. Bancorp, about his bank's commitment to its community —especially given FBOP/Park National Bank's strong record in this regard— and asked him to put it in writing. Unfortunately, before I ever received a response, U.S. Bank announced its plans to lay off hundreds of employees at four Illinois facilities, including one in Chicago, one in Oak Park and one in Oakbrook Terrace, beginning in March."

"This disturbing news is further evidence of the unacceptable consequences stemming from the increasing trend of bank failures and consolidations. U.S. taxpayers have not invested billions of dollars of their money in the banking industry so that big banks —with little warning or notice— can continue to lay off workers and tear apart our communities. It's time for banks to start focusing on job creation, not job elimination."

"And the onus is not on banks alone. It is my hope that regulators look at these announced layoffs by U.S. Bank as further evidence of the human consequence of bank closures and consolidations; there should be no excuse for overlooking the impact these actions have on our local communities and civic organizations. Bank failures are a reality we need to deal with, and

regulators have a job to do. Regulators must look beyond the standard CRA rating and assess a purchasing bank's knowledge of the market it is moving into, as well as a bank's record of commitment to community investment and support. If we as a country are to continue on the road to financial recovery, they must do their part in accounting for the foreseeable consequences that bank closures and consolidations have on our communities."

###